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ABSTRACT

In discussing the role of practical experience (be it called clinical experience, field experience, an internship, simulation, or role-playing) in the preparation of educational administrators, the authors present survey data and an example of institutional requirements. The survey data include information on state standards concerning the experience that is required both for administrator certification and for hiring. A description of the administrator preparation program at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, provides the institutional example. The results of a survey of practicing principals and superintendents are also reported. (Author/IRT) concerning the experience

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Clinical Experiences and Preparation of School Administrators

Clifford H. Chaffee and Charles A. Sloan

The professional literature reveals a variety of conceptions and descriptions which have been bandied about when referring to school administration. Among the various descriptive classifications, school administration has been called a practical science, an art, the management of a public enterprise, and the art of policy leadership and management. Throughout the definitions there appears to be a common thread which writers in the field tend to assume. This commonality can be referred to as a "doing" dimension. As with all careers that claim to be professions, individuals are called upon to perform some service which in turn requires some skill in an act of "doing."

Current writers in the field are stressing the notion of skill competency. This focus is not new however. Katz[1] writing in the Harvard Business Review (1965) categorizes the skills needed by effective administrators. They are identified as named conceptual, human, and technical skills. The three types are listed in hierarchical order, with conceptual skills being related to top level management. Human relations skills are associated with the middle management level, while technical skills are emphasized at the lower, or supervisory level. Katz states that all three categories of skills are required to some degree at each management level. The degree to which they are utilized by an individual functioning at a given level varies depending upon whether the person is functioning at the top or lower level of the organizational ladder.

Further discussion as to whether the most appropriate model for school administrators is the technical-administrator, or the philosophical-administrator is beyond

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the scope of this article. In fact, this is probably a false dichotomy which serves no significant purpose to pursue. It is important, nevertheless, to recognize that elements of the technical as well as the philosophical are essential ingredients when conceptualizing a model of the competent administrator.

The test of the competent administrator comes in the world of reality. The form of the test should satisfy the following concerns: First, does the individual know enough about theory to conceptualize and envision promising courses of action? Second, can he communicate these notions to those within and without the organization? Third, has he the skills to enlist willing cooperation from those whose services are necessary for realization of organizational goals? Competencies that are required to meet such standards, as the above, can be acquired through study and opportunities to practice the application of knowledge and skills to problems of the real world.

Competency development opportunities can take a number of different forms. Field experiences, internships, simulation, and role playing are some of the ways that skills can be developed. Clinical experiences offer the individual the opportunity to "try out" his solutions to real or simulated problems which provides a mode where one can "learn" from his own experience and having the benefit of expert supervision to provide guidance and feedback when appropriate.

Having stressed the importance of "hands-on" kinds of experiences, the conclusion should not be drawn that useful knowledge in school administration is restricted to that gained from these experiences. Obviously, one who doesn't function from a broad knowledge base is handicapped because of his inability to envision a wide variety of options.

An effective program preparing school administrators must include all three components: knowing what, knowing how, and the opportunity to develop skills that practicing professionals are required to perform.

A Study of State Requirements

A national survey was conducted to ascertain the extent to which the various states require clinical and/or field experiences in the certification of school administrators.[2] The questionnaire soliciting this information was administered in the last months of 1979, and results were obtained by March of 1980.

Replies from 48 of the 50 states were received and tabulated. "Clinical experience" was defined as "an umbrella term which included all 'learning by doing' activities as opposed to 'learning by reading' or 'learning by listening.' A clinical experience could be in the form of simulations, role-playing, micro-supervision, as well as activities in which the individual interacts in the setting of the 'real world.'"

The questionnaire was addressed to the State Director of Teacher Education and Certification whose name and address appeared in the 1979 Directory of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification.

Table 1, below presents the results from the questionnaire regarding the kind of clinical or actual experience required for the lowest-level administrative certificate as reported by the states responding.

Table 1

Requirements for the first or lowest-level administrative certificate experiences

Experiences	Responses	
	Yes	No
a. A clinical experience	19	18
b. Actual experience in an administrative role	11	19
c. Neither of the above	12	6
d. Both of the above	2	NA

Neither a clinical experience nor actual experience is required by twelve of the forty-eight states reporting. However, eleven states require some type of actual experience before an administrative certificate is awarded. It was reported by some respondents that states were discussing a clinical experiences requirement.

Table II contains data as to whether clinical experiences were required for certain types of administrative positions.

Table II

The number and administrative positions for which clinical experiences are required

Positions	Responses of States Yes	No
a. Superintendent	19	13
b. Assistant Superintendent	16	13
c. Other Central Office role Please name (Roles in "C" above)	11	12
d. Principal	22	14
e. Assistant Principal	18	14
f. Department Head	7	17

The data shows that more states require clinical experience for certification as a principal than any other administrative position. It is interesting to note that in seven states one aspiring to the position of department head must undergo a clinical experience.

Table 3 contains data to answer the question as to the source of the clinical experience requirement in state certification.

TABLE III

Origin of clinical experiences required for certification as a school administator

Response	Number of Responses
a. State law	4
b. Ruling of the State Department of Education	14
c. Other (Please name) Commissioner, Bd. of Ed., etc.	5

The various State Departments of Education are identified as the most common locus of this rule. No rational explanation can be offered as to the limited response to this question.

The financing of clinical experiences is an area of concern to those having responsibility to prepare school administrators. Consequently, the survey contained a question which asked whether the state provides financial support to the institutions offering a program leading to state certification. Only one of the fifty states financially supports clinical experiences according to the data received in this study.

Table IV records the responses received regarding perceptions of the future. The respondent was asked to offer an opinion as to whether a state requirement for a clinical experience is likely to occur in the "foreseeable future."

Table IV

If there is no state requirement for a clinical experience in your state, which of the following statements would you agree with? (Please mark an "X" the appropriate statement).

Response	Number of Responses
a. A state mandate is highly likely within two years	2
b. A state mandate may occur within two years	2
c. A state mandate will probably not occur for at least two years	5
d. A state mandate is unlikely within foreseeable future	10
e. (Other possibility) _____	

Nineteen responses corresponds closely with the number of states not now requiring a clinical experience (the exact number is 18). From the data, one can conclude that little movement or change is expected in the states not now requiring a clinical experience. Ten of the nineteen responses indicate that a state mandate is unlikely within the foreseeable future.

AN INSTITUTIONAL EXAMPLE

Institutions engaged in preparing educational administrators have struggled to bring together current theoretical knowledge with the lessons gained and practical experience in the "real world." Recently, several states are requiring clinical experiences as a requirement for those seeking administrative certification. A survey conducted this year (1980) by the writers indicates that nearly one half of the fifty states require clinical experiences in programs leading to certification for school administrators.[3] In addition, a recent study[4] (Byne, Hines and McCleary 1979) of persons seeking administrative positions indicated that practical and internship experiences aided them in securing a position.

The programs in educational administration and school business management at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois are designed to prepare individuals to assume roles as administrators in educational and other institutional settings. The programs have two dimensions: the instructional, and the clinical. The instructional dimension focuses upon the acquisition of relevant knowledge, theory, and skills in the setting of the "real world." The clinical dimension allows the student and the faculty to assess (in a controlled environment) the student's potential for success as an administrator or business manager.

Recently, the Illinois State Board of Education Certification Committee outlined the purposes of required clinical experiences; they are:

1. To enable the student to acquire practical experience to complement classroom instruction.
2. To provide the student with opportunities to demonstrate development of administrative and management skills and techniques in a field setting.
3. To expose the student as much as possible to the working of the total educational and management enterprise.
4. To expose the student to a variety of educational administration and school business management settings.
5. To assess the student's potential for success as a school administrator or business manager, as evaluated by university personnel and practicing school administrators and business managers.

Clinical Experiences Requirements

The clinical experiences of school administration and school business management preparation programs are based upon the following operational policies and procedures.

1. Clinical experiences will be required of all students seeking (a) a Master's Degree in educational administration, (b) a CAS Degree in educational administration, (c) the General Administrative Endorsement, (d) School Business Officials Endorsement, and (e) the Superintendent's Endorsement.
2. Clinical experiences will be tailored to building level administrative positions for those students seeking the Master's Degree and/or the General Administrative Endorsement. They will be tailored to district level administrative positions for those students seeking the CAS and/or the Superintendent's Endorsement.

3. Clinical experiences will be specifically and systematically planned, evaluated and documented.
4. There will be a clear transcript trail and supporting record that documents each student's clinical experiences.
5. Clinical experiences will be introduced early in a student's degree or certification program and they will be continuous throughout that program as the student completes role and function courses, a clinical laboratory, and a field based internship.
6. Clinical experiences will involve the student in a variety of administrative task areas including: personnel administration, program development and evaluation, facilities, business operations, finance, pupil-personnel services, school-community relations, governmental relations, and legal requirements.
7. The progression of clinical experiences in a field based internship will involve the student in two levels of activity that require increasing administrative and management responsibilities.

   Level One activities are class related clinical experiences, such as:

   1.1 Observing and documenting an administrative activity.

   1.2 Collecting and analyzing administrative documents.

   1.3 Interviewing administrative personnel.

   1.4 Assisting in performance of an administrative task.

   Level Two activities are field-based "internship" experiences, such as:

   2.1 Performing an administrative and/or management task.

   2.2 Coordinating the work of others.

   2.3 Supervising the work of others.

   2.4 Defining the work of others.

8. Clinical experiences require documentation of performance prepared by the student, on site supervision by an NIU faculty member, and certification of completion co-signed by an NIU faculty member and a designated field supervisor.

The format below may serve to clarify what is referred to as course related "clinical experience" and the "internship" as well as the sequence of those activities in the program. The following sequence is an example of a student seeking the principal level certification.

COURSE	FOCUS/REQUIREMENT
LEEA 500 School Organization and Administration: Principles and Concepts (3)	Theory No clinical experience
LEEA 535X Supervisory Behavior	Content of School Administration Two clinical experiences required
LEEA 510 Elementary Principal (3) or LEEA 511 Secondary School Principal (3) or LEEA 512 Middle School Principal (3)	Administrative Practices of Principalship - two clinical experiences required.
LEEA 580 Clinical Laboratory (1)	Fifteen hours of experience
LEEA 586 Internship (2)	Full-time field based internship with a school principal for 80-120 hours for 2 semester credits
Other special courses	These courses may also include clinical experiences, especially designed for the field of study.

Certification for the superintendency would follow a similar pattern with appropriate sixth year level courses and clinical experiences. In addition to experiences for building level administrators and the superintendency consideration is made for other central office positional clinical experiences.

In summary the faculty in educational administration at NIU subscribe to the following guidelines for clinical experiences:

1. Locally appropriate experiences agreed upon by the intern and the field supervisor - the local administrator and approved by the Director of Clinical Experiences for Educational Administration at NIU.

2. The intern experiences are categorized by task areas; these include:

   A. Program Development
   B. Personnel Administration
   C. School Plant
   D. School Business Administration
   E. Finance
   F. Non-instructional Program and Personnel
   G. Pupil Personnel
   H. Legal Requirements
   I. School-Community Relations

3. Each student intern must experience the positional role by conducting activities in each task area. Some task areas receive more attention than others. However, all areas are expected to receive coverage.

Current Evaluation of Internship Experiences

Recently, a study was conducted of the perception of local school administrators who have supervised educational administration interns. This study involved 75 administrators, 25 elementary principals, 25 secondary principals and 25 superintendents.

Each group was asked to respond to a questionnaire. The questionnaire simply requested the local school administrator to provide a list of priority experiences for the type of position they occupied and for which they had supervised an intern during the past year.

Findings:

Principals, whether they are elementary or secondary school principals, unanimously concur on three ideas; they are:

(1) Locally developed experiences are most appropriate across the task areas.

(2) All principal candidates must experience working with school discipline.

(3) All principal candidates need experiences in dealing with parents and teachers. The most occurring recommendations were:

   a. Dealing with parents in interpreting the school to the public - all facets of school-community relations.

b. Conducting teacher evaluation processes.

Superintendents also responded highly favorably to the notion of required internship experiences. They too believed a broad based central office experience was necessary. In addition, superintendents highlighted two special experiences; they were:

1. Special time and experience should be given to learning how to work effectively with Boards of Education.
2. Experience in developing and maintaining effective relationships with faculty, administrative and parent groups should be considered as an important priority.

These findings have encouraged our continued efforts in providing internship experiences for NIU's educational administration students.

SUMMARY

Our current posture is squarely in favor of combining the traditional and current practice in the preparation of school administrators. This approach combines the best of the academic and the opportunity to relate to current practices in the "real world."

There appears to be an increasing concern by state certification officers and agencies to relate theory and practice. Moreover, we feel that our experience and local consumers agree that practical experiences in the preparation of administrators is highly desirable. It is our hope that relating these concerns and experiences stimulate others who are concerned with clinical experiences and the preparation of school administrators.

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